

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

DODE-00 SCA-01 PA-01 PRS-01 /049 W

----- 080271

O 121525Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3050

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 13177

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: FURTHER PRESS REACTION TO AMBASSADOR'S INTERVIEW WITH
EPOCA MAGAZINE

REF: ROME 13107

SUMMARY: PRESS REACTION CONTINUES HEAVY TO AMBASSADOR'S INTERVIEW WITH EPOCAMAGAZINE. PATTERN OF COMMENTS CONTINUES TO BE THAT SUMMARIZED IN REFTEL; LEFT WING PRESS CRITICAL, CENTRIST AND SOME LEFT OF CENTER DAILIES PLAYING STORY STRAIGHT AND APPLAUSE FROM MAJOR RIGHT OF CENTER ROME PAPER. RADIO AND TV COVERAGE SO FAR HAS EMPHASIZED PUBLISHED NEGATIVE COMMENTS FROM LEFT. COMMUNIST SENATE GROUP HAS PRESENTED PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY ON GOI REACTION TO INTERVIEW. SOCIALIST EXPONENT (VITTORELLI) HAS BITTERLY CRITICIZED INTERVIEW IN A LOCAL GENOA PAPER, BUT PSI DAILY AVANTI* GIVES LITTEL SPACE TO ISSUE TODAY AND NONE TO VITTORELLI ARTICLE. SIMULTANEOUS PUBLICITY GIVEN TO WILLINGNESS OF PSI SECRETARY DEMARTINO TO ACCEPT INVITATION TO VISIT US (ROME 13131) TENDS TO COUNTER-BALANCE PSI EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN ABOUT INTERVIEW. END SUMMARY.

1. EPOCA MAGAZINE (DATED 9/20) HIT STANDS TODAY WITH COVER SHOWING STATUE OF LIBERTY HOLDING UP RED TRAFFIC SIGNAL AND BEARING TITLE "WE DON'T WANT THE PCI IN THE GOVERNMENT THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR HAS TOLD US." AMBASSADOR'S INTERVIEW ACCOM-
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PANIES ARTICLE ON "HOW THE AMERICANS SEE US AFTER JUNE 15

(ELECTIONS)" WHICH DESCRIBES CLOSING OF A NUMBER OF US COMPANIES AND DESCRIBES "ATTEMPT OF ITALIAN COMMUNISTS TO PRESENT THEMSELVES IN CERTAIN US CICLES" AS THE ONLY VALID INTERLOCUTOR FOR THE FUTURE.

2. PRESS REACTION (PARTICULARLY COMMUNIST) TO INTERVIEW CONTINUES HEAVY TODAY. PCI DAILY, L'UNITA STATES (INACCURATELY) THAT INTERVIEW HAS PROVOKED "FIRMLY NEGATIVE REACTIONS FROM MOST OF THE PRESS". PAPER THEN PRINTS PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY PRESENTED YESTERDAY BY PCI SENATE GROUP. INQUIRY ASKS WHAT STEPS GOI HAS TAKEN OR INTENDS TO TAKE TO PROTEST INTERVIEW. COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED ROME DAILY, PAESE SERA, IN SEPTEMBER 11 EVEING EDITION EMPHASIZED CRITICAL COMMENTS OF LA STAMPA (REFTEL). PAESA SERA MORNING EDITION TODAY CARRIES STORY BY JOHN CAPPELLI FROM NEW YORK ASSERTING THAT INTERVIEW MUST BE SEEN IN CONTEXT OF "KISSINGER'S PREOCCUPATION" TO DEFEND HIMSELF AGAINST CRITICISM THAT HE IS SACRIFICING US INTERESTS "ON ALTAR OF DETENTE WITH USSR".

3. LEFT WING ROME DAILY IL MESSAGERO HEADLINES ARTICLE ON "INTERFERENCE OF US AMBASSADOR" WHICH PICKS UP CRITICISMS APPEARING IN L'UNIT AND AVANTI* YESTERDAY. EDITORIAL SPEAKS OF "RUMORS" OF AMBASSADOR'S POSSIBLE RECALL AND SUBSTITUTION BY AMBASSADOR CARLUCCI AND SPECULATES THAT EPOCA INTERVIEW DESIGNED BY AMBASSADOR TO "DRAW ATTENTION TO HIMSELF" TO DELAY RECALL TO WASHINGTON.

4. SOCIALIST DIRECTORATE MEMBER PAOLO VITTORELLI IN ARTICLE IN GENOA PAPER, IL LAVORO, SHARPLY CRITICIZES AMBASSADOR AND CALLS ON GOI TO CLARIFY TO PARLIAMENT ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS NATO. VITTORELLI STATES THAT NATO TREATY DOES NOT SPECIFY THAT ALLIANCE DESIGNED TO PROTECT MEMBERS AGAINST WARSAW PACT AND THAT FOREIGN AMBASSADORS MUST NOT BE PERMITTED TO TELL INDEPENDENT STATES WHAT TYPES OF GOVERNMENTS ARE COMPATIBLE WITH ALLIANCES TO WHICH THEY BELONG. VITTORELLI CONCLUDES THAT INTERVIEW IS "ACT OF ILLEGITIMATE INTERFERENCE" AND THAT AMBASSADOR SHOULD THEREFORE NOT BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN AT HIS POST. SIGNIFICANTLY, PSI OFFICIAL ORGAN, AVANTI* DOES NOT MENTION VITTORELLI PIECE AND TODAY GIVES BRIEF, FACTUAL COVERAGE TO CONTINUING POLEMICS.

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5. RADIO AND TV COVERAGE OF INTERVIEW HAVE GENERALLY BEEN FACTUAL, BUT HAS PLAYED UP NEGATIVE COMMENT FROM LEFTWING NEWSPAPERS. AT LEAST ONE RADIO NEWSCAST, HOWEVER, (7:30 EVEING NEWS SEPT. 10) HAD CRITICAL EDITORIAL COMMENT ALLEGING CONTRADICTION BETWEEN INTERVIEW AND SPIRIT OF DETENTE.

6. LEFT OF CENTER LA STAMPA AND CORRIERE DELLA SERA AND

CENTRIST IL GIORNALE GAVE FACTUAL COVERAGE TO STORY TODAY. LEFT OF CENTER MILAN DAILY, IL GIORNO, MIXES FACTS WITH SOME NEGATIVE COMMENTS ABOUT "SERIOUSNESS" OF INTERVIEW, WHICH PAPER TERMS "SOME SORT OF PREVENTIVE EXCOMMUNICATION (OF PCI)". EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT LA STAMPA CHIEF EDITOR (LEVI) OPPOSED EDITORIAL CRITICISM OF INTERVIEW WHICH APPEARED IN LA STAMPA YESTERDAY, BUT BOWED TO OPINION OF OTHER EDITORS WHO ARGUED THAT PAPER HAD RECENTLY PRINTED EDITORIAL VERY FAVORABLE OF US FOREIGN POLICY AND HAD TO ACHIEVE "BALANCE".

7. CENTRIST FLORENCE AND BOLOGNA DAILIES LA NAZIONE AND RESTO DEL CARLINO (SAME OWNERSHIP) GAVE FAVORABLE PLAY TO IMPACT OF INTERVIEW WHICH HAS "IRRITATED" PCI BY KILLING JOURNALISTIC SPECULATION ABOUT A CHANGE IN US POLICY TOWARDS ITALY.

8. RIGHT OF CENTER ROME DAILY IL TEMPO AGAIN CARRIES EDITORIAL COMMENTING FAVORABLY ON INTERVIEW. SAME ISSUE CARRIES USEFUL STORY FILED BY TEMPO WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT DE MEDICI STATING THAT INTERVIEW IN KEEPING WITH WASHINGTON POLICY AS DEMONSTRATED BY RECENT WARNING TO PCI EXPONENT EUGENIO PEGGIO TO STICK TO JOURNALISTIC PURPOSES OF HIS TRIP TO US. PEGGIO CASE, HE WRITES, "IS ONLY ONE SIGN OF US INTENTION TO ELIMINATE ANY AMBIGUITY ABOUT ALLEGEDLY IMMINENT DIALOGUE BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND PCI".

9. PUBLIC COMMENT BY SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES LEADER CARIGLIA AND PRIVATE COMMENTS FROM SEVERAL CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT SOURCES HAVE BEEN FAVORABLE. DC, REPUBLICAN, AND SOCIAL DEMOCRAT DAILIES HAVE CARRIED STORY FACTUALLY AND WITHOUT EDITORIAL COMMENT.

10. PUBLICITY, INCLUDING RADIO AND TV COVERAGE, GIVEN TO READINESS OF PSI SECRETARY DEMARTINO TO ACCEPT INVITATION TO VISIT US TENDS TO COUNTERBALANCE EARLIER PSI EXPRESSIONS OF CONFIDENTIAL

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CONCERN ABOUT INTERVIEW. VOLPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, POLICIES, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ROME13177
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750316-0952
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750957/aaaabynx.tel
Line Count: 155
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 ROME 13107
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 JUN 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <09 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FURTHER PRESS REACTION TO AMBASSADOR'S INTERVIEW WITH EPOCA MAGAZINE
TAGS: PINT, IT, US, (VOLPE, JOHN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006